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INDIANA UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

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A brief description of the purposes of the University's honors program of intensive language study abroad for high school students is given here. Capsule descriptions of the participating student, cooperating high schools, 8-week study sessions, and types of financial assistance are also included. (AR)

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VOLUME XVIII

INDIANA UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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The Honors Program and its Purpose

The Honors Program in Foreign Languages for High School Students conducts intensive language learning sessions abroad in French, German, and Spanish for selected advanced students from cooperating Indiana high schools. In each foreign country daily concentrated instruction and drill in the foreign language is integrated into a carefully arranged personal experience within the culture. Those students selected must be of junior class standing and at least in their third year of study of their foreign language at the time of applying, or, in the case of unusually mature students, of sophomore class standing and in at least their third year of study, having completed "first year" high school work, (one full level) by the end of the eighth grade.

Practical fluency of the foreign language by each student is the primary working goal. All other purposes often associated with programs abroad are secondary. Most students who have participated have greatly increased their ability to speak the foreign language with good pronunciation and intonation without making glaring mistakes, and with a command of vocabulary and syntax sufficient to express their thoughts. A few acquired near-native skills.

In achieving these results in sixty days abroad, the Program and its students are only capitalizing on the more fundamental investment of funds, time, and effort which these students and their schools have previously made at home. Three years of effective foreign language teaching and learning in Indiana have been bringing all students closer to personal command of the spoken language than they or their schools may have realized. One of the Program's purposes is to demonstrate this fact to high school faculty and students so that they will make the extra effort necessary to reach comparable goals at home. Indeed, experience to date is showing that these goals are beginning to be reached. Where teachers have carefully organized Honors Student alumni participation in the classroom, deliberately using them for teaching purposes, fourth-year students who did not go abroad often become very nearly as fluent before they graduate as the Honors Student alumni. Other aspects of this effort, such as longer teaching sequences, extra hours in the language laboratory, and emphasis upon the spoken language as a teaching and learning goal, are now being worked out by participating schools.

The Cooperating School and its Purpose

We work with secondary schools in Indiana that are already making these extra efforts and intend to make use of the Honors Program

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to help them succeed. Such a school must be offering at least three years of continuous instruction in French, German, or Spanish, with at least the fourth year of instruction to be offered independently of third-year work in the school year following participation in the Program.

It is also important that participating schools provide returning Honors Students with special teaching and learning opportunities designed to sustain and advance the speaking and listening skills they will have acquired during the summer abroad.

The Participating Student and his Purpose

The Program is especially designed for the student of junior class standing who is now in at least his third year of study of a modern foreign language, or of sophomore class standing and at least at the same level of study. We expect him to continue his foreign language in his home high school following participation in the Program. We look for the student who is eager to become proficient in the use of his language as it is spoken, and who knows he must work hard to reach this goal at home or abroad. To this student we offer the chance to compete for a place in a program designed specifically to bring him to this goal, at a price he can afford. About ninety such students -- up to thirty in each language -- can be selected each year.

The Study Session Abroad

In the French, German, and Mexican towns the summer classes continue approximately eight weeks. Twenty-five to thirty hours of class instruction in the language are given each week under the direction of an American high school teacher assisted by native instructors. A program of lectures and cultural events rounds out the instruction. Senior American and native personnel direct and supervise the activities in all three countries. Each Honors Student lives with a native family. No English is spoken with anyone at any time. Travel in the foreign country is limited to a few short field trips related to the learning situation.

Financial Assistance

In the first five years of the Program we have been able to hold the price at $650 for Spanish and $950 for French and German. This includes transportation, instruction, board and room, and local field trips. Original selection is based on academic and personal merit only. When the selection of Honors Students has been completed, the Program then attempts to help the applicant or his school find the means to permit participation. This is done as follows:

If at the time of application the parents consider themselves unable to meet the full costs of the Program, they may request help by filing a "Parents' Confidential Statement." If the applicant is selected, this financial statement is analyzed by the Office of Scholarships, which determines the level of apparent need. Then to the extent they are available, funds contributed from community resources or to the I.U. Foundation for this purpose are allocated so as to make the Program as equitably and widely available as possible. In every case the minimum contribution by the student or his family is $100.

It must be emphasized that appropriated funds from tax sources are not available for grants-in-aid, and this part of the Program can operate only through the generosity and sacrifice of students, parents, community benefactors, and donors.

Until the summer of 1965 the Honors Program was supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Columbus School Foundation of Columbus, Indiana, and local donors in various other towns in the state also helped to provide funds for individual grants-in-aid. To supply these supplementary funds we have now turned to other school communities, service clubs, and business and industry having international interests. The Indianapolis Foundation and Mead Johnson Foundation, Inc. of Evansville are among the generous contributors who have made it possible for students from their cities to participate. The availability of local funds, however, in no way implies selection of any student or students from that schook, and thus does not affect the policy of selecting on academic and personal merit. Under the present plan, schools will be advised, as soon as final selections have been made, as to the amount needed to support their own students. The community is then asked to forward to the I.U. Foundation the necessary grant-in-aid funds. This should be done as soon as possible, certainly by January of the following year.

The Future

In addition to their speaking skills, Honors Students have acquired a profound respect for foreign culture and an infectious enthusiasm for language learning. They report that to live and speak fully within the foreign language is one of the summer's most rewarding accomplishments. We expect to see develop, from among the alumni of this Program, a new breed of teachers of languages and literatures (and related fields), foreign service personnel, and others who can represent well the best traditions of the United States in its business, professional, and social relationships with the rest of the world.

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